

ATCHAFAKYA BASIN PROGRAM: EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

INTRODUCTION TO TEACHERS

In the year 2003-2004, the Atchafalaya Basin Program, within the Department of Natural Resources, contracted with Dr. Jocelyn Donlon and Dr. Jon Donlon, of Donlon & Donlon Consultants in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to write five classroom lessons covering the Atchafalaya Basin. These lessons were inspired by the construction of the opening of the Atchafalaya Welcome Center, at the Butte La Rose exit on I-10 (between Lafayette and Baton Rouge). In fact, this curriculum culminates in a fieldtrip to the Atchafalaya Welcome Center.

The current lessons have been written for the 8th-grade Social Studies classroom, coordinated with the Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) designed by Louisiana's Department of Education. Of course, the materials can be adapted for other disciplines and grade levels; however, they are, at present, targeted to social studies for 8th-graders. The curriculum consists of five lesson plans. One lesson provides materials for three 45-minute class periods. These materials can be expanded or contracted, to suit your classroom needs.

Each of the five lessons includes the following resources:

1. "Student Essay": written at 8th-grade level
2. "What Did you Learn": multiple-choice quiz on essay
3. "What Do you Think": critical-thinking question
4. "Let's Go Surfing": Internet resources for students to explore
5. "Just For Fun": Student experiment for fun
6. "Three-day lesson plan" for 45-minute period, based on information in student essay, with resources, activities, group work, homework, worksheets, and guidelines

Below is a brief description of each lesson, with the relevant GLEs listed:

Lesson 1: "Let's Go Paddling: What to Know Before we Go"

- Provides an overview of the geography and ecology of the Atchafalaya Basin, including location, water cycles, and flood control measures. Activities organized around canoeing trip.
- GLEs covered in 3 days:
 2. Locate major landforms and geographic features, places, and bodies of water/waterways on a map of Louisiana (G-1A-M2)
 5. Describe and analyze the distinguishing physical and/or human characteristics of Louisiana regions (G-1B-M1)
 7. Explain how or why specific regions are changing as a result of physical phenomena (e.g., changes in the coastal wetlands) (G-1B-M3)
 8. Identify and describe factors that cause a Louisiana region to change (e.g., natural occurrences, disasters, migration) (G-1B-M3)
 9. Explain ways in which goals, cultures, interests, inventions, and technological advances have affected perceptions and uses of places or regions in Louisiana (G-1B-M4)
 14. Analyze, evaluate, and predict consequences of environmental modifications on Louisiana landforms, natural resources, and plant or animal life (G-1D-M1)
 15. Analyze the benefits and challenges of the Louisiana physical environments on its inhabitants (e.g., flooding, soil, climate conducive to growing certain plants) (G-1D-M2)
 16. Analyze the distribution and uses of Louisiana's natural resources (G-1D-M3)
 78. Describe and analyze the impact of Louisiana's geographic features on historic events, settlement patterns, economic development, etc (H-1D-M4)

Lesson 2: "A Cultural Gumbo: The People of the Atchafalaya"

- Provides an overview of the cultural groups who settled in the Basin: Native American, Acadian, African, and European. Activities organized around the ingredients in gumbo that were contributed by these cultural groups (file, roux, okra, andouille)
- GLEs covered in 3 days:
 5. Describe and analyze the distinguishing physical and/or human characteristics of Louisiana regions (G-1B-M1)
 8. Identify and describe factors that cause a Louisiana region to change (e.g., natural occurrences, disasters, migration) (G-1B-M3)
 11. Explain why humans settled and formed societies in specific regions or why immigrant groups (e.g., Acadians) settled in specific areas of Louisiana (G-1C-M3)
 12. Describe the causes and effects of cultural diffusion and the effects of cultural diversity in Louisiana (G-1C-M5)
 13. Describe factors that contribute to economic interdependence at the local, national, and global level, as related to Louisiana's past and present (G-1C-M6)
 14. Analyze, evaluate, and predict consequences of environmental modifications on Louisiana landforms, natural resources, and plant or animal life (G-1D-M1)

17. Identify a contemporary Louisiana geographic issue, and research possible solutions (G-1D-M4)
41. Explain the importance of being an informed citizen on public issues, recognizing propaganda, and knowing the voting issues (C-1D-M5)
75. Describe the contributions of ethnic groups significant in Louisiana history (H-1D-M1)
81. Explain cultural elements that have shaped Louisiana's heritage (e.g., festivals, music, dance, food, languages) (H-1D-M6)

Lesson 3: "Louisiana's Alligator Economy: Sustaining its Health"

- Provides information about economic impact of Louisiana alligator, statewide conservation measures, and internationally-marketed products generated by alligator industries. Activities organized around shopping for alligator products, with attention to sustainable practices. Career possibilities associated with alligator economy explored.
- GLEs covered in 3 days:
 42. Analyze situations involving scarcity (limited resources) at the individual, group, and societal levels to determine the need for choices or what is gained/lost by a decision (E-1A-M1)
 43. Explain how effective economic decisions (e.g., determining the best level of consumption) require comparing the additional costs of alternatives with additional benefits (E-1A-M2)
 44. Explain choice/trade-offs, cost/benefits, and opportunity costs related to making personal economic decisions (E-1A-M3)
 46. Use a variety of resources to research education and training for jobs and careers (E-1A-M5)
 47. Cite examples of how skills/knowledge and technical training increase personal productivity and career opportunities, and which skills/knowledge would enhance particular career prospects (E-1A-M5)
 48. Characterize and analyze the use of productive resources in an economic system (E-1A-M6)
 50. Describe institutions (e.g., banks, government agencies, large companies, small businesses) that make up economic systems (E-1A-M7)
 53. Explain and analyze factors affecting production and allocation of goods/services in Louisiana and the United States (E-1B-M2)
 56. Identify various types of taxes and user fees and predict their consequences (E-1B-M5)

Lesson 4: "Louisiana Crawfish: A Festival of Facts and Fun"

- Provides discussion of Louisiana crawfish as natural, cultural, and economic resource in Basin, including information on trapping, farming, and research. Covers relationship between water conditions and crawfish industry.

Activities organized around a 3-day “mini festival,” consisting of exhibits, music, contests, games, food, and demonstrations.

- GLEs covered in 3 days:
 14. Analyze, evaluate, and predict consequences of environmental modifications on Louisiana landforms, natural resources, and plant or animal life (G-1D-M1)
 15. Analyze the benefits and challenges of the Louisiana physical environments on its inhabitants (G-1D-M1)
 48. Characterize and analyze the use of productive resources in an economic system (E-1A-M6)
 52. Explain how supply and demand affect prices (E-1B-M1)
 53. Explain and analyze factors affecting production and allocation of goods/services in Louisiana and the United States (E-1B-M2)
 57. Explain reasons for trade between nations and the impact of international trade (E-1B-M6)
 61. Describe the influence/impact of inflation or unemployment on different groups of people (E-1C-M2)
 81. Explain cultural elements that have shaped Louisiana’s heritage (H-1D-M6)

Lesson 5: “Government Agencies Working Together: The Atchafalaya Welcome Center”

- Provides background information about governmental agencies involved in design, construction, and operation of the newly-constructed Atchafalaya Welcome Center in Butte La Rose, Louisiana. Activities organized around researching public and private organizations involved, culminating in a fieldtrip to the Welcome Center. Students hold scavenger hunt at the Center.
- GLEs covered in 3 days:
 5. Describe and analyze the distinguishing physical and/or human characteristics of Louisiana regions (G-1B-M1)
 24. Identify current government leaders at the state, local, and national levels in the United States (C-1A-M6)
 28. Explain why taxes are needed and purposes for which tax monies/revenues are used (C-1A-M9)
 54. Explain the difference between private goods/services and public goods/services and give examples of each (E-1B-M3)
 81. Explain cultural elements that have shaped Louisiana’s heritage (e.g., festivals, music, dance, food, languages) (H-1D-M6)

These five lessons are largely intended to be taken in the order provided—particularly with the first two lessons. You should begin with Lesson 1, which provides an introduction to the geography of the Basin, and follow with Lesson 2, which offers an overview of the cultures that live there. Lessons 3 (alligator) and 4 (crawfish) can be taken in an interchangeable order. Lesson 5 is the

culminating activity, where students take a fieldtrip to the Atchafalaya Welcome Center to explore what they've learned.

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These lessons will eventually be expanded and posted on the Department of Natural Resources' website. We are interested in your feedback: what works well for you? What can be improved?

For any information, suggestions, and permissions, please contact the following:

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Happy teaching about Louisiana's most extraordinary natural resource—the Atchafalaya Basin!